

### **Gabrielle Rayner, age 21, American Cruise Lines Internship, Summer 2018**

My name is Gabrielle Rayner but most people call me Gabby! I am currently 21 years old. I am originally from Elkridge, Maryland and come to UCF to run on the Cross Country team and pursue studies in both Hospitality and Event Management. I am currently a Senior at Rosen College and set to graduate this December. This summer I am one of two student Interns for American Cruise Lines as a Cruise Director.



#### **Why did you choose this particular internship?**

I have travelled outside of the US several times before and took the Cruise Lines Operations Course with Professor Wickey this past Spring Semester. I have always been fascinated by the Cruise Ship industry and was eager for an opportunity to get first-hand experience before graduating. Most cruise lines offer crew contracts that last for 4-6 months at a time. However, the internship offered by American Cruise Lines has a three-month option which fits perfectly in a Summer semester.

#### **How did your parents, family and friends reacted when you told them where you would be interning?**

My family is well aware that I am interested in cruising so they were very excited to hear I had accepted the offer. I already live very far from home so I am used to not being near my family all of the time but still get homesick every now and then.

#### **How did you prepare for the internship?**

Packing was a MAJOR challenge. I spoke with friends who had worked on a cruise line before and also worked closely with my recruiter to pack all of the essentials. For this internship I would not find out my ship assignment until arriving at training so I did my best to pack for all weather conditions. I packed clothing that could easily be layered depending on if it was too hot or too cold. However, once on board I realized that when working long hours on the ship all day I probably should have invested more time in packing comfy clothes for relaxing in my time off.



Olympic Mountain Range

### **First Impressions...**

My first impression when on board was very exciting. I arrived and dropped my bags off in my cabin then headed straight out to work. I was arriving the evening before a cruise turnaround (the last day of one cruise and the first day of the next) and needed to be fully caught up in less than 12 hours. I got to meet a lot of passengers and crew as I was shown around the ship and received piles of paper documents to review. On my first ship I shared a room with a fellow manager then had my own room dependent on the number of managers on board at the time.

### **Tell us about the cruise internship.**

Throughout my internship I learned more than I ever could have imagined. I was also very pleased to be able to tap into my previous skills developed at UCF Rosen College as well as my previous Guest Service positions in Orlando in handling guest requests, handling escalations, maintaining professionalism, organization, and coordinating daily logistics while managing 150+ passengers. I also had the opportunity to see some amazing locations around the US and now have a plethora of knowledge from all of my itineraries I have travelled. I'm sure that this information will come in handy in the future. I have done a lot of sailing and been on the water for a good chunk of time in my life so I do not have any issues with sea-sickness luckily! However, there were times when I was homesick but spent some time picking up little items and post cards to mail back home! There were some parts of the time on board that cell phone reception was pretty reliable and I could keep in contact with family and friends over the phone or through social media.

For this internship I spent 7.5 weeks on board two different ships, spent 6 days on a break at home in Orlando, and finished the summer with 6 weeks on board another ship.



Friday Harbor Whale Watching

**Lessons learned...**

The biggest lesson I learned during this internship was to be confident in what you do! Though I was a student manager on board, I still had to meet the very high guest expectations in the same way as a seasoned employee. Many times if I did not know the answer to a question or was stumped by a guest's situation I found it was easily solved by remaining confident and using all of my resources to get the right answer. I realized that I know a lot more than I originally thought simply just needed to apply it. After three years of various management courses and three years working in the industry I was finally able to utilize a lot of the skills and tools that I had seen written out on paper and not yet applied.

**Would you do it all over again?**

If given the opportunity to intern on a cruise line I would be more than happy to do so! Though I do not think I will return to the American Cruise Lines fleet, I would be very interested in looking into international travel and working with crew members from other cultures and from around the world on a larger cruise line. I think that my experiences on board during this internship will certainly set me up for success and be an amazing addition to my resume when hunting for jobs following graduation.





Butchart Gardens, Victoria, Canada



Multnomah Falls, Washington State